

USACHPPM
HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

14 November 2003

The HIO Update provides information regarding global medical and veterinary issues of interest to the United States (US) Army. The update does not attempt to analyze the information regarding potential strategic or tactical impact to the US Army and as such, should not be regarded as a medical intelligence product. Medical intelligence products are available at <http://mic.afmic.detrick.army.mil/>. The information in the HIO Update should provide an increased awareness of current and emerging health-related issues.

HOT TOPICS	2
Chondroitin Supplements May Lack Active Ingredient	2
Four Popular Diets All Work Well, U.S. Study Shows	2
Public Defibrillator Training Saves Lives, Study Finds	2
USEUCOM	3
Burundi: Government Launches New Malaria Medicine	3
Central African Republic: Shigellosis Outbreak	3
Ebola Suspected in Death of 7 in Republic of Congo	3
Liberia: Shigellosis Outbreak	3
Russia: Opistorchiasis is Increasing in Ekaterinburg	4
Russia: Outbreak of Hepatitis A Reported in Omsk	4
Russia (Samarskaya Oblast): Cases of Hantavirus Infection in Tolyatti	4
UK: A/Fujian/411/2002 (H3N2)-like Strains Circulating in the Community	4
UK: Health Officials Investigate an Outbreak of Legionnaires' Disease	5
USCENTCOM	5
Israel: 5000 Babies to Get Vitamin B1 Injections	5
Kyrgyzstan: Focus on Brucellosis in South	5
Tajikistan: Rains May Increase Typhoid Risk	6
USNORTHCOM	6
Anthrax Scare Leads to Closing of Mail Centers in Washington	6
Influenza Update in the U.S. for the Week ending 1 November 2003	7
Pennsylvania: Hepatitis A Cases Now Total 240	7
Pentagon Stresses Need for Chlamydia Testing	8
USPACOM	9
Bangladesh: Dengue's Comeback Catches Health Authorities Unprepared	9
Hong Kong SAR: Local Case of Japanese Encephalitis Confirmed	9
India: Dengue Fever Update	9
USSOUTHCOM	10
Venezuela: Yellow Fever Update	10

HOT TOPICS

Chondroitin Supplements May Lack Active Ingredient

12 November – Reuters reported some dietary supplements sold as arthritis remedies for people and animals fall short on the key ingredient chondroitin, a commercial testing company says. ConsumerLab.com found that among 49 supplements containing chondroitin, glucosamine or MSM, or a combination of these ingredients, two sold for human use did not contain the level of chondroitin stated on the label. Two others intended for pets and other animals contained no chondroitin at all, according to the White Plains, N.Y.-based ConsumerLab.com. The company regularly tests dietary supplements for contamination and consistency with what's on the label. For a fee, it will license its "Seal of Approved Quality" to products that pass. Dr. Tod Cooperman, president of ConsumerLab.com, told Reuters Health that although most of the products his company tested did pass, consumers should still be cautious about chondroitin supplements because the ingredient costs manufacturers about 10 times what glucosamine does. That means there's an incentive to skimp on it. He advised that supplement buyers be on the lookout for "wobble words" such as "complex," "blend," or "formula" in the label's description of the chondroitin sulfate in the product. [View Report](#)

Four Popular Diets All Work Well, U.S. Study Shows

09 November – Reuters reported no matter what diet you are on, if you eat less and lose weight you also lower your risk of heart disease, doctors told a conference. Weight Watchers, the high-fat Atkins diet, the extremely low-fat Ornish diet and the high-protein, moderate carbohydrate Zone diet all help people lose weight and all reduce cholesterol, but in different ways, the researchers said. "On average, participants in the study reduced their heart disease risk by 5 percent to 15 percent," Dr. Michael Dansinger of Tufts University in Boston told a meeting of the American Heart Association. "Instead of saying there is one clear winner here, we are saying they are all winners." And, as might be expected, the closer dieters followed the plans, the more weight they lost. Those who stuck it out for a full year lost, on average, 5 percent of their body weight -- or about 10 to 12 pounds. While the dieters reduced heart disease "risk factors" such as cholesterol levels, overall blood pressure did not drop much and the study did not last long enough to see if this translated into a lower long-term risk of heart disease. [View Article](#)

Public Defibrillator Training Saves Lives, Study Finds

11 November – Reuters reported nearly twice as many people survived cardiac arrest in public places where volunteers were trained to use a device to shock the victims' hearts into beating normally again, a study released on Tuesday found. The research is the largest study to date on the benefits of putting automatic external defibrillators in places such as shopping malls and office buildings. The study enlisted about 20,000 volunteers in 24 U.S. and Canadian cities. Defibrillators were placed at 993 sites such as shopping centers, sports venues, apartment complexes and office buildings. One group was trained in how to use the defibrillator and to administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation, or CPR. Volunteers were told to call emergency services and start CPR, then use the defibrillator on a person in cardiac arrest. The other group received training only in CPR and was told to call an ambulance immediately. When patients were treated with CPR and a defibrillator, 29 out of 129 cardiac arrest victims survived. Only 15 out of 103 people survived when they received CPR alone. [View Report](#)

USEUCOM

Burundi: Government Launches New Malaria Medicine

11 November – AllAfrica.com reported the government of Burundi launched a new [malaria](#) treatment, a combination therapy of artesunate and amodiaquine, on Monday, and announced the stoppage of chloroquine and fansidar, which have become resistant to the disease. He said the new therapy was being introduced after studies showed that chloroquine and fansidar had failed to cure more than 25 percent of patients. Studies done on the molecules originating from artesinate, a combination of artesunate and amodiaquine, show that the combination of the two medicines was powerful in more than 95 percent of patients. The government, with the help of UNICEF, WHO, EU, USAIDS and the British Foreign Development and Assistance Office will avail the drugs at affordable prices because they were expensive in private pharmacies. [View Article](#)

Central African Republic: Shigellosis Outbreak

06 November – ProMed reported an epidemic of [shigellosis](#) has been confirmed in the Central African Republic, with a total of 379 cases and 23 deaths from 16 Jun to 29 Oct 2003. The cases are in the regions of Paoua and Bozoum, north west of the capital city, Bangui. Institut Pasteur, Bangui analyzed stool samples and confirmed the diagnosis of *Shigella dysenteriae* type 1, which is sensitive to nalidixic acid and ciprofloxacin. Medecins sans Frontieres, Spain and Coopi are supporting the Ministry of Health in containing the epidemic. However, since the affected regions face important population movements as a result of the recent civil war, the control of the epidemic is not straightforward. Migration of people to neighboring Chad is also cause for concern. [View Report](#)

Ebola Suspected in Death of 7 in Republic of Congo

06 November – ProMed reported 7 people have died in the Republic of Congo from what could be another outbreak of the deadly [Ebola virus](#), health ministry officials said. The 7 died 31 Oct 2003 in the remote northern Cuvette West region, which was struck by Ebola earlier this year. 5 members of a single family died 31 Oct 2003 in Mbanza, about 900 kilometres (550 miles) north east of the capital, Brazzaville. 2 nurses who treated them at a clinic in the nearby village of Mbomo also died. A health ministry letter sent to the World Health Organization, obtained by the Associated Press, said the victims displayed symptoms of a hemorrhagic fever similar to Ebola. The health ministry letter, which said 15 cases were reported in all, called on the World Health Organization to donate supplies for a team of Congolese specialists headed Thursday to the area to determine why the 7 died. [View Report](#)

Liberia: Shigellosis Outbreak

06 November – ProMed reported in addition to the [cholera](#) outbreak, a steady increase in the number of cases of bloody diarrhea has been registered since 18 Aug 2003 in Monrovia, Liberia, with a total of 1,857 cases. The number of deaths is not registered in the health facilities that are participating in the emergency surveillance system. An average of 240 cases per week have been reported during the month of October 2003. Stool samples have been taken, and the

diagnosis of [shigellosis](#) confirmed. Further laboratory investigations have ruled out *Shigella dysenteriae* type 1. WHO and UNICEF are coordinating interventions to ensure proper management of cases and of the environment, including safe water and sanitation. [View Report](#)

Russia: Opistorchiasis is Increasing in Ekaterinburg

07 November – ProMed reported according to Infectious and Parasitology Diseases Prevention Center, in the Jeleznodorojniy district of Ekaterinburg there were 36 cases of [opistorchiasis](#) over the last 9 months [of 2003]. Last year [2002] during the same period, there were 26 cases. In Ekaterinburg overall there were 297 cases of opistorchiasis registered over the last 9 months, while for the same period in 2002 there were 238 cases. Morbidity has increased 1.26 times (23.9 per 100,000 population). Sanitary physicians are concerned that the real situation with opistorchiasis is probably even worse than that reflected by these figures because of the complexity of proper diagnosis. Humans can be infected after eating raw fish or river fish that was not properly cooked. The fish can contain larvae, which grow into mature parasites if they reach the liver or pancreas. [View Report](#)

Russia: Outbreak of Hepatitis A Reported in Omsk

11 November – ProMed reported An outbreak of [hepatitis A](#) has been reported in the Sherbakul region of Omsk. Single cases of hepatitis A infection were reported from the beginning of autumn. However, currently 13 people are hospitalized, 9 of whom are children. All of them were admitted to the infectious diseases department of the regional hospital and they are being given appropriate treatment. The cause of infection is contaminated drinking water. The water was transported from the nearest spring in containers. [View Report](#)

Russia (Samarskaya Oblast): Cases of Hantavirus Infection in Tolyatti

07 November – ProMed reported 7 cases of [Hantavirus hemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome \(HFRS\)](#) were registered last week in Tolyatti. Chief sanitary physician of the Sanitary Epidemiological Surveillance Center, Vladimir Drobishev, stated that this number of HFRS cases is a matter of concern for the city. According to the opinions of sanitary physicians, this outbreak can be explained by the fact that rodents -- in order to protect themselves from the cold -- are seeking warmth and thus come into close contact with people in their homes. This situation increases the risk of infection for humans. According to the website "Samara today", no rodent control measures have been implemented since the year 2000. Thus rodents have had favorable conditions for their multiplication. According to Drobishev all 7 cases exhibited typical symptoms of HFRS, but there had been no fatalities. [View Report](#)

UK: A/Fujian/411/2002 (H3N2)-like Strains Circulating in the Community

08 November – ProMed reported clinical indicators of [influenza](#) activity continue to rise in England and Northern Ireland and are now above baseline levels in Scotland. Rates in Wales remain stable and below the baseline level. Sporadic detections of influenza A viruses continue to be reported from all countries in the United Kingdom (UK). The rate for influenza-like illness in England is highest in the north and in the 0 to 4 year age group. In England young children make up the majority of infections reported from hospital sources, while most detections from virological surveillance in general practitioners' surgeries are in the 15 to 44 year age group. Current information suggests that the UK is moving into the influenza season. Characterization

of the influenza A viruses from 2 deaths in Scotland and also 2 in England have confirmed the strain as A/Fujian/411/2002 (H3N2)-like. While children die from influenza every year, these deaths are earlier than usual, indicating that a larger outbreak is possible. This strain was recently responsible for Australia's biggest influenza outbreak for 5 years. No underlying risk factors have been identified so far for any of the reported deaths in Scotland or England. [View Report](#)

UK: Health Officials Investigate an Outbreak of Legionnaires' Disease

09 November – ProMed reported health officials have confirmed 2 more cases of [Legionnaires' disease](#) in an outbreak in Hereford which has killed 2 people and left 2 more in a critical condition in the hospital. All victims have links to Hereford city center, where investigations are focused. Public health officials are investigating the cause of the outbreak. Environmental health officers visited shops and businesses to take water samples from air conditioning systems to check for the bacteria which causes the disease. Doctors across the region had been alerted to the outbreak and were on the lookout for further cases. Microbiologists are conducting detailed tests on samples of bacteria taken from the 4 confirmed cases to determine whether the patients had contracted the disease from the same source. Dr Mike Deakin, Herefordshire's director of public health, added that further cases of the disease linked to the outbreak could not be ruled out. The incubation period is normally between 2 and 10 days but can be up to 3 weeks. [View Report](#)

USCENTCOM

Israel: 5000 Babies to Get Vitamin B1 Injections

09 November – ProMed reported Health Ministry officials were set to order vitamin B1 injections to some 5,000 infants believed to have been fed the soy-based milk substitute "Remedia." Vitamin B1 (thiamine), a vital substance, was revealed in tests to be missing from the new formula of the German-made Remedia soya milk product, despite being listed on the packaging as an ingredient. Babies that relied exclusively on the milk had no other source of vitamin B1, a Health Ministry official explained. A complete lack of the vitamin leads after a period of time to damage to the central nervous system and the heart. 3 babies have died and 17 are hospitalized with encephalopathy. The Health Ministry recommends that children who have drunk the milk be given vitamin B1 supplements. The ministry claims it was not aware that Remedia had introduced a new formula into the Israeli market. [View Report](#) [View Report 2](#) Concurrent with this investigation is an alert issued by the New York City Department of Health. This was issued to health care practitioners on 9 Nov 2003, with outreach into communities within New York City where this product might be in use. [View Report 3](#)

Kyrgyzstan: Focus on Brucellosis in South

03 November – IRIN News reported health officials in southern Kyrgyzstan have expressed concern over the growing number of people infected with [brucellosis](#), an infectious bacterial disease of human beings transmitted by contact with infected animals, infected meat or milk products and characterized by fever and headache. Health officials have expressed concern over the rapid increase in the number of cases occurring. In the first six months of 2003, some 1,170 cases were registered, 270 more compared to the same period last year. Every fifth

person infected was either a child or an adolescent. Indeed, some Kyrgyz health persons claim that Kyrgyzstan, a nation of just 5 million, has the highest prevalence of the disease in Central Asia. According to regional authorities, brucellosis is also becoming a burden on the country's already under-resourced health system. Standard treatment for a patient with the acute form of the disease costs US \$150, whereas the average monthly salary stands at just \$25. Health specialists are particularly concerned over the situation in the southwestern Batken Province, where the morbidity was three times the average in the country, and southern Jalal-Abad Province. [View Article](#)

Tajikistan: Rains May Increase Typhoid Risk

04 November – IRIN News reported following a serious outbreak of [typhoid](#) in the Tajik capital Dushanbe last month, with over 400 confirmed cases, UN officials warned on Tuesday of a further possible spread of the disease as heavy rains strike the city. "Even if the outbreak is in decline now, there is a danger that it might flare up again if there is severe flooding," Paul Handley, officer in charge for the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Dushanbe told IRIN, citing possible cross contamination between the city's drinking water and sanitation systems. According to the OCHA official, although the initial source of last month's outbreak had been identified and been treated with chlorine, the problem of an antiquated water and sanitation infrastructure in the city of close to one million remained. While the Tajik Ministry of Health had reported a decline in the number of new cases presenting themselves in hospitals, many people had been receiving treatment at home, or might not know they had been infected at all, he added. As of part of the latest outbreak, there had been 444 confirmed cases of the disease reported on Monday, with another 1,022 suspected cases currently hospitalized. [View Article](#)

USNORTHCOM

Anthrax Scare Leads to Closing of Mail Centers in Washington

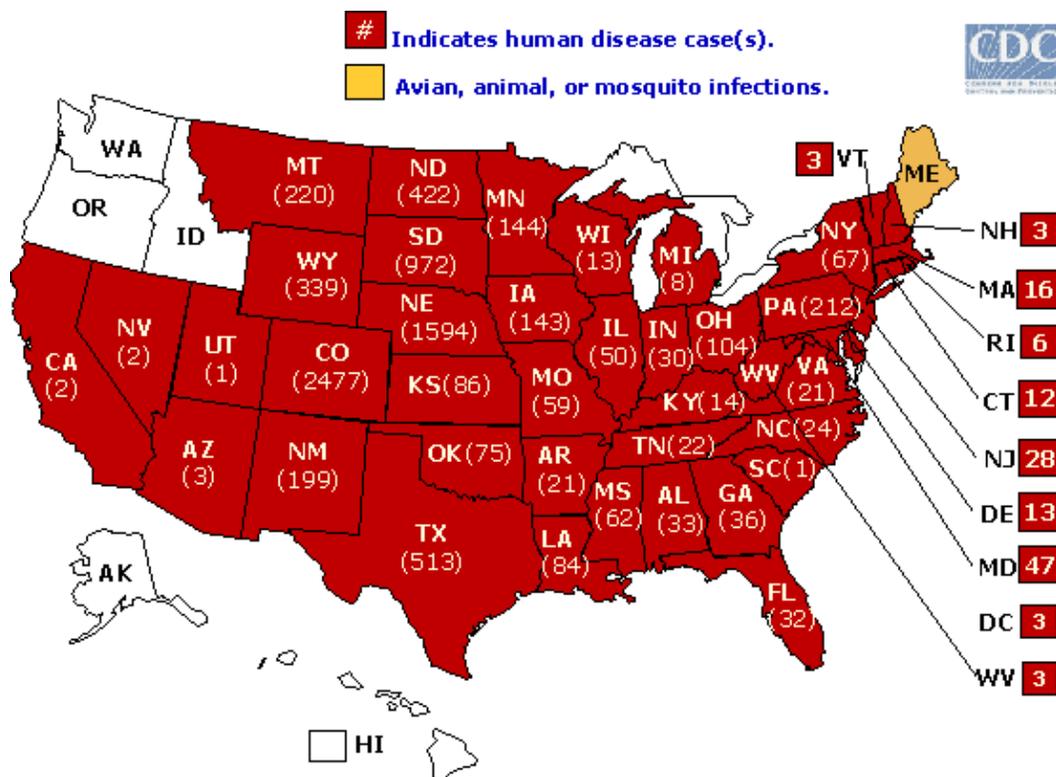
07 November - Eleven Washington-area post offices were closed after a routine air sample taken at a Navy mail facility in the region tested "positive for [anthrax](#)," a Postal Service spokesman said. The spokesman, Azeezaly Jaffer, said in a statement that the facilities were closed "out of an abundance of caution" while biohazard contamination testing was being conducted. There was no indication that the more than 1,000 postal workers at the facilities had been exposed to anthrax. Five workers at Anacostia were given the antibiotic Cipro as a precaution. Mr. Jaffer said that mail moving through the Anacostia facility had been processed through the V Street facility in Washington, one of the 11 shut down. The company hired to transport the mail also collects mail from other area facilities. [View Report](#)

from 185 on Fri 7 Nov 2003. Chi-Chi's Inc., the owner of the restaurant, issued a statement late on Friday in which it stated that 6 employees were among the confirmed cases -- the number previously reported by the state was 4. No cause has been determined in the outbreak, but investigators believe it was more likely a problem with food-worker hygiene than a food item that arrived at the restaurant already contaminated. [View Report](#)

Pentagon Stresses Need for Chlamydia Testing

25 October - Stars and Stripes reported roughly half of military women who should be tested for the sexually transmitted disease [chlamydia](#) might not be getting the required routine exam, and a solution to the problem could still be three years away as health officials await a computer tracking system. Instead, officials rely on independent studies to show where potential problems lie, she said. One Defense Department study conducted between April 2000 and March 2001, which started before the testing mandate but ended after its implementation, showed that 59 percent of active-duty women slip through the testing cracks. Published in 2002, the study states that 41 percent of active-duty women were tested over that one-year period. Researchers studied 163,299 sexually active women ages 16 to 26 enrolled in the military health system, which included civilians, active duty and dependents. Women ages 16 to 20 had a 34 percent testing rate, and women ages 21 to 26 had a 28 percent overall testing rate. The Pentagon Health Affairs office is working on a system to ensure all female patients receive the proper care and is pinning hopes on a new computer tracking system, called Composite Health Care System II. [View Report](#)

West Nile Virus in the United States as of November 5, 2003



USPACOM

Bangladesh: Dengue's Comeback Catches Health Authorities Unprepared

06 November – ProMed reported Dengue has struck rather belatedly and unexpectedly. At a time when people began to feel that the dreaded [Dengue fever](#) would spare them at least for this season, there is bad news from hospitals. More than 100 people have already contracted the disease. Experts have said the late and sporadic rain which the country experienced this year helped the breeding of the *Aedes* mosquito, the deadly carrier of the disease. When the disease did not break out in July, the usual time for it, a kind of complacency set in among people that it might not return. Now the reality is that dengue has staged a comeback. Though no fatality has been reported so far, the reports say some of the patients are suffering from the life-threatening type of the disease, the symptoms of which include unbearable pain and bleeding. [View Report](#)

Hong Kong SAR: Local Case of Japanese Encephalitis Confirmed

06 November – ProMed reported the Department of Health (DH) is investigating a case of Japanese encephalitis in a 38 year old local woman living in Fairview Park, Yuen Long. Serology tests on her blood samples yielded positive result for [Japanese encephalitis virus](#) infection. The woman developed fever, headache, and drowsiness on 25 Oct 2003. She consulted a doctor and was admitted to Tuen Mun Hospital on 27 Oct 2003. She is now under intensive care. The level of risk to the population at this present time is judged to be low. Nonetheless, the DH is conducting investigation to search for further possible cases. This is the 1st Japanese encephalitis case reported this year. Investigations by the DH revealed that the patient had no travel history within 2 weeks of the onset of illness. Therefore, the case has been classified as a local one. Prompt control actions have been carried out by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD). [View Report](#)

India: Dengue Fever Update

06 November – ProMed reported despite repeated assurances from authorities concerned, including health minister Digvijay Khanvilkar, that the dengue situation was under control in Uttar Pradesh, one more person succumbed to the deadly viral infection in a Pune city hospital on Wednesday. This is the 6th casualty in the city this season due to [Dengue fever](#). In addition, in view of rising dengue cases in Uttar Pradesh, the state government on Wednesday warned mayors and municipal commissioners of strict action if they failed to ensure proper cleanliness and hygienic conditions in their respective cities. Meanwhile, a 10 year old child from Sadar died of dengue in a private hospital. 10 more positive cases of dengue were detected in Lucknow. While 6 blood samples tested positive for dengue in KGMU, 4 tested positive in SGPGI. 15 more suspected dengue patients were admitted to KGMU. [View Report](#)

USSOUTHCOM

Venezuela: Yellow Fever Update

11 November – ProMed reported Venezuelan health authorities have reported that, as of 31 Oct 2003 (epidemiological week 44), 40 cases of sylvan [yellow fever](#) have been confirmed. During the past week, no new cases or deaths have been registered. The confirmation of 2 new cases in the municipality of Guanarito, state of Portuguesa, during epidemiological week 37, indicates a broadening of the area of recent activity of the disease in the country. To date, the municipalities registering outbreaks of sylvan yellow fever are the following. (1) State of Zulia; municipalities of Jesus Maria Semprun, Machiques, Rosario de Perija, Catatumbo, and Jesus E. Lossada, on the border with Colombia and with a large volume of population movement. (2) State of Tachira: municipalities of Uribante, Fernandez, Feo, and Libertad. (3) State of Portuguesa: municipality of Guanarito. The zoonosis division of the Environmental Health Directorate, reported that this week, a vaccination team will travel to the municipalities of Guanarito, Papelon, Santa Rosalia, and San Genaro de Boconoito in Portuguesa state, with the purpose of intensifying the yellow fever vaccination campaign in order to achieve the coverage appropriate for high-risk areas. [View Report](#)

Please contact the below-listed POC for suggested improvements and/or comments regarding this report. This report is also available on the USACHPPM website at <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/Hiouupdate/>.

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